



United States Senate

NEWS RELEASE

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Northwest Senators Urge BPA, Utilities to Come Together, Preserve Affordable Power for Region

Following court ruling on BPA payments to investor-owned utilities, senators call on BPA to bring all stakeholders together to resolve issue

WASHINGTON, D.C. – All six senators from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho are calling on the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to help bring all stakeholders together to resolve issues resulting from a recent 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling.

The Northwest Power Act of 1980 authorized BPA to make payments to investor-owned utilities in the Northwest. These payments bring the rates of investor-owned utilities, which buy BPA power at market-based rates, in line with the rates of public utilities, which buy BPA power at cost-based rates. On May 3, 2007, the 9th Circuit Court ruled that the way these payments were calculated violated the Northwest Power Act. Following the ruling, BPA suspended payments until it could work out a solution. The six Northwest senators are calling on BPA to bring public and private utilities, BPA, consumers, states, and public utility commissions together to resolve the issue.

“Everyone in the region has an interest in reaching a legally sustainable compromise,” the senators wrote. **“We urge all of the parties to immediately come together in good faith in an effort to find that solution to these issues. We urge BPA to lead and facilitate that effort to the maximum extent possible.”**

Payments under the BPA residential exchange program went to Puget Sound Energy, Avista, Portland General Electric, PacifiCorp, Idaho Power, Rocky Mountain Power, and NorthWestern Energy.

The letter sent to BPA was signed by U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Larry Craig (R-ID), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Patty Murray (D-WA), Gordon Smith (R-OR), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).